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THE MISSIONS OF THE CHURCH:

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF THE PROVINCIAL SYNOD,
IN CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, MONTREAL,
ON WEDNESDAY, DEC. 11, 1872.

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THE MISSIONS OF THE CHURCH :

A SERMON.

I. John, iv. 4.—“ *Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.*”*

It is no ordinary occasion that gathers us in this Cathedral Church to-day. We meet in obedience to the summons of our Right Reverend Father in God, our Metropolitan Bishop, to hold a session of that Provincial Synod, which legislates under our Divine Lord for His Church in the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario.

And it is no ordinary session of our Provincial Synod that the service of to-day inaugurates. We meet to enact a canon for the election of a Missionary Bishop; and whether that canon will leave the appointment in the hands of the House of Bishops alone; or in the hands of the House of Bishops conjointly with the Lower House; or whether some other arrangement may be made by the canon for the appointment of a Missionary Bishop—in any case I presume that this special session of our Provincial Synod will not close till a Missionary Bishop is at least designated.

*This text was taken from the Second Lesson for the Morning Service.

It will be a disappointment to many earnest Churchmen in Canada, aye and in England too, if this session of our Provincial Synod is unable from any cause to take decisive action in this matter. I will not, however, contemplate the possibility of a result so disastrous. Rather would I venture to express the fond hope that this Synod may be able to devise such measures for the provision of an adequate stipend both for the Missionary Bishop, and for his associated band of Missionary Clergy, that there may be found no necessity for further delay.

The practical suggestion of my own Diocesan has, I believe, received the concurrence of our other Right Reverend Prelates. It will doubtless be a satisfaction to many if that suggestion, or some modification of it, paves the way in the judgment of this Synod for what we all desire—decisive and immediate action.

We are rising, I trust, to a sense of our responsibilities as a true branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church. We are beginning to realize in Canada the world-wide nature of that commission which our Divine Head has given us: for we declare by the very purpose of our gathering here in Synod, that we are a *Missionary Church*: that, God helping us, we will go up and take possession of the whole territory of the Dominion for Christ, and His Ancient Fold.

We will not on the one hand, let the Latin Communion, with its novel Trentine Creed, and its still more novel Vatican dogmas, (against which the Old Catholics are so nobly protesting,) get the start of that Church which, thanks be to God for our Blessed Reformation, maintains undefiled "The faith once delivered to the saints,"—the faith taught by the Holy Apostles—sealed

by the blood of Martyrs—and upheld by our own beloved Church long before the Roman Augustine set foot on the shores of Britain.

Nor will we, on the other hand, allow ourselves to be outdone in zeal by those modern Christian Communions, which, though some of them are partially faithful to Apostolic doctrine, have lost the precious heritage of Apostolic order, abandoned the ritual of the early Church, and rent the unity of Christ's Body by countless divisions.

Verily the Church that claims to be Apostolic alike in her doctrine and in her order, the Church which can prove both on the ground of dogma, and on the ground of history her identity with the Church which our Lord and His Apostles established on earth, ought to be the first in missionary zeal—ought to be prominent in all lands in missionary enterprise.

Verily to such a Church comes with special emphasis the risen Master's charge, "Go ye, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And surely such a Church, faithful to her Lord—faithful to His teaching—faithful to His own three-fold Ministry—faithful to the two Sacraments of His love as channels of His grace—and faithful to His own inspired Word—may claim the full comfort of the Master's promise, which follows the Master's charge: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Our own beloved Mother Church in England has not been wanting, during this century at least, in missionary zeal and enterprise; and I need hardly remind you how greatly God has blessed her in consequence; how the revival of spiritual religion in England, and the extension

of the influence of the Church have gone hand in hand with the progress of her missions.

May we not, then, take it as a token of good, as a proof that God has great things in store for us, and is about abundantly to bless us as a Church in this fair Dominion, that He has put into our hearts to enter upon a distinctly missionary enterprise of our own ; and that this enterprise is, as we fondly hope, about to be so matured by our action as a Synod that it will be possible to take immediate steps for the designation of a Missionary Bishop ?

Need we, my brethren, encouragement to the earnest prosecution of the missionary work of our Church ?

I. Then I would ask you first to look back for a few minutes at the History of the Church of the Living God from the beginning. What has been that history hitherto, but a history, in spite of drawbacks and losses, of victory and progress in missionary work ?—a history, in the words of Canon Liddon, “of the gradual self-expansion of an Institution which, from the first hour of its existence, deliberately aimed, as it is aiming now, at the conquest of the world for Christ.”

Think of those first missionaries of the cross, the Apostles of the Lamb,—weak, helpless, poor—despised Galileans, humble fishermen most of them, lacking, with one illustrious exception, the education of the schools, destitute wholly of the advantages of rank, and wealth, and station. Think of the colossal forces which were arrayed against them, first in a degenerate Judaism, with its worldly expectations hostile to Messiah’s empire over souls—its formal Pharisaism hostile to the spiritual religion of the Master—and its cold and sceptical Sadduceeism, which would encounter with its unbounded scorn

and all too powerful rage the heralds of "Jesus and the Resurrection."

But mightier forces were ere long arrayed against the missionary Church of Jesus. True to her Catholic mission, she soon spread beyond the narrow bounds of Palestine. She advanced to the eastern Capital of the Roman Empire, the Syrian-Antioch, thence to Ephesus, the great meeting place of European and Asiatic culture, thence to Athens and Corinth, centres of thought and commerce; till at last in her onward western march she reached imperial Rome, and planted the banner of the cross even in Cæsar's household. Then would all the might of the Pagan Roman Empire in the zenith of its power be roused to crush the missionary Church of Jesus.

It could not be otherwise. For what were the claims of the Holy Catholic Church? It craved not like the idolatries of the nations the admission of another god to Rome's Pantheon. Its claim was exclusive. "It accepted" as Paley remarks "no compromise. It must prevail, if it prevailed at all, by the overthrow of every statue, and altar, and temple in the heathen world."

And think what Paganism was, (thus necessarily roused to violent opposition,) when the Apostles and their successors, the missionary Bishops of the early Church, went forth to win the world for Jesus. 'Twas throned in power—'twas upheld by law,—'twas rendered venerable by antiquity, and attractive by a sumptuous worship. The beauties of painting and statuary and architecture; the charms of music and song; the harps of poesy; the fascinations of festivals and shows, all ministered to the magnificence of the Paganism of the Cæsars,—and last, but not least, 'twas mighty in its hold on the corrupt

heart, because it ministered to its lust, and sanctioned its unutterable wickedness.

You know the story of the inevitable contest that followed between Christianity and Paganism. From the first burst of hatred in the Neronian persecution to the last terrific onslaught of Diocletian, the missionary Church of Jesus had to undergo one long, legalized, almost unbroken persecution ; and yet, during those 250 years of torture, and blood, and martyrdom, the missions of the Church were rapidly advancing, so that long before the hour of outward victory arrived at the beginning of the fourth century, Tertullian could say to the pagans, " We are but of yesterday, and we have filled all that belongs to you—the cities, the fortresses, the free towns, the very camps, the palace, the senate, the forum ; we leave to you the temples only."

Doubtless the missionary zeal of the Church was most fervent, and consequently missionary success most signal in the first three centuries ; but nearly every succeeding century has its wondrous story to tell of missionary progress and victory. Think of the missionary labors in the fifth century of the Apostle of Ireland, St. Patrick ; and of the British missionary Bishop St. Ninian, in the Scottish Lowlands. Think of the devoted band of missionaries that went forth in the sixth and following centuries from " Iona's lonely isle." Think of the missionary labors of those noble missionary Bishops, St. Aidan and St. Colman, and their associated missionary presbyters, to whose labors our Anglo-Saxon forefathers were so largely indebted.

To come to the era of modern missions, our Mother Church has girdled the world with her missions—and not in

vain. Yes, notwithstanding the sneer of the modern Sadducee, we can fearlessly say, not in vain.

We can point to results (though our duty is independent of them)—to self-supporting native Churches in Western Africa, and Southern India, supplied by native clergy, presided over by missionary Bishops. We can tell of 5,500 baptisms during 1871, and 21,000 communicants in connexion with one only of the Missionary Societies of our Church. We can appeal to the impartial testimony of the representatives of our Queen in India, and officers of the British Army, and even to the testimony of the editors of heathen newspapers, that in vast Hindostan Christianity is beginning to tell.

And need I speak of one of whom Eton, Oxford, England, may well be proud; one consecrated to the missionary Episcopate in New Zealand in 1861? Alas! all too brief was that Episcopate. Ten years and a half passed and that sainted Bishop was called to receive the martyr's crown; yet what a story of missionary progress do those ten years yield. Think of grammars or skeleton grammars made by that rarely gifted scholar of thirteen out of the twenty-four dialects of the Malay Archipelago. Think of 160 Melanesian youths and maidens rescued from the deepest abysses of pagan darkness and cruelty, and receiving under Bishop Patterson's supervision Christian education and training in Norfolk Island. Think of one of them, George Sarawia, ordained to the ministry of our Church, labouring now amongst his own people, earnest of a goodly band yet to follow, who will spread the light of Christ's doctrine in those dark islands of the southern seas. Surely in the thrilling story of the Apostle of Melanesia, our own sainted Bishop and Martyr, in his

heroic labours and sacrifices, worthy of the purest enthusiasm of the primitive Church, we have enough to stir up our flagging zeal, enough to rouse us to a sense of our duty as a Church to the aboriginal races of this Continent, and to our own countrymen who are settling in the newly opened portions of the Dominion.

Do we, however, need still further encouragement to the earnest prosecution of missionary work, than is supplied by this glance at missionary progress and victory in ancient and modern days? Then we have it, in what has ever been—in the nineteenth century as in the first—*the secret of that progress and victory*. What has that secret been?

How is it that in spite of the most violent opposition—the most cruel forms of persecution—the strongest national prejudices; yea, in the face of difficulties positively appalling that the Church of the Living God has won her onward way amid the nations? The answer is in the words of my text—“Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.” A Divine Christ has ever been with His Church. This has been the secret of her progress and victory.

II. If, then, we need further encouragement to the earnest prosecution of the missionary work of our Church, we have it in the constant presence of Jesus with His Church. “Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

He that is in the world is great. Let us not underestimate his greatness. He is “the god of this world,”—great in power, in resources, in subtlety, in his knowledge of human nature, in his cunning adaptation of false systems to some of the cravings of man, and in his perversion of God’s truth.

But, great though he undoubtedly is, He that is in us is greater. Yes, whether it be the Spirit of God, or the Christ of God that is here referred to, blessed be God, He is greater than our greatest foe.

Take the reference of the Apostle as applying to Christ. Verily, He is greater than the god of this world. For the Christ of the Catholic Church, the centre of Christian thought, and love, and adoration is Divine—not a mere phantom divinity such as Pantheism might set up—nor merely divine on account of the moral glory and perfection of His human life, as Socinianism teaches—nor divine only according to the inferior sense of the old Arians and modern Unitarians. The Arian Christ, says Canon Liddon, “is parted from the Divine essence by a fathomless chasm; whereas the Christ of Catholic Christendom is internal to that essence. He is of one substance with the Father.” This Christ of the Scriptures and the Church, whom we adore as our Lord and our God, is with us according to His own promise.

He is with us all the days. His presence (oh, that we may all realize it more) pervades all our work for Him. He is with all the offices of the Ministry of His own appointment—with our Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. He is with us in the ministration of the Word and Sacraments, with us in the pastoral visitation of the sick and whole in our several cures, in the instruction of the young, the guidance of enquirers, and the counselling of the perplexed. He is with us in retirement where we prepare in prayer, meditation, and study for our public work. He is with us in every diversity of sphere, settled, transitional, or missionary. He is with us in our great cities, our town parishes and country missions—with us in diocesan, parochial and educational work for our Lord.

And He is with us, according to His promise, even unto the end of the world. The presence of our omnipotent Christ pervades all ages of His Church's history. He is as truly present with every faithful branch of His Church now as in apostolic days. This pervading, perpetual presence of our Saviour God is the pledge of ultimate victory to His Church. Great may be the difficulties in our path; great the antagonistic force arrayed against us; but let them be a hundred-fold greater, let us not despair, for "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world."

Not only infinitely greater in nature—as God is greater than the most exalted creature—but also in consequence, greater in power, in resources, in wisdom. Oh! let us individually put this to the test, for the safety of the Church is the safety of every individual member. It is not head knowledge that will keep us safe; nor Catholic creeds, nor unrivalled formularies, nor Christian training, nor orthodox teaching, though all these we prize; but CHRIST IN US, THE HOPE OF GLORY. We have all our individual conflict to fight, to which we are pledged by the vows of Holy Baptism. Would we have that conflict issue not in defeat, but in victory? Then we must cling with loving hearts to One greater than ourselves, greater than our enemies—Christ the Captain of our salvation.

III.—Permit me, my brethren, before closing, to apply this subject to the chief object of our present Synod. If the encouragements to the earnest prosecution of the missionary work of our Church are great, there is undoubtedly urgent need to carry out that missionary work in the territory of Algoma. For other portions of the great North West Missionary Bishops are being designated.

One has recently gone home to England to be consecrated ; surely the spiritual needs of Algoma are more pressing than those of the territory on Hudson's Bay, the vast Saskatchewan Valley, or other portions of that "Great Lone Land."

In Algoma there are a considerable number of Indians still in Paganism ; and into Algoma is flowing a steady stream of immigrants from Great Britain and the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario. Settlements are being rapidly made along that 800 miles of coast line from Parry Sound to Prince Arthur's Landing, which, with the exception of the Manitoulin Islands, forms the southern boundary of the proposed new Diocese of Algoma. A large portion of this territory, that lying between Killarney and Sault St. Marie, has, I believe, already been surveyed and marked into townships. Our Anglo-Saxon race, the colonizing race of the world, is already pushing its way into the interior of this mighty territory. And, as has been remarked by the writer of a recent letter to our Bishops. "When the new Pacific Railway is commenced, the number of the inhabitants of Algoma will increase still more. It is increasing now, rapidly ; and in a short time we shall find thriving villages, flourishing farms, and successful manufactures, where heretofore there has been a dismal swamp, or an uncleared forest, or an Indian wigwam, or a few scattered tribes."

How important then the question put by the writer of that letter to our Fathers in God : "What will be the character of that people ?" What shall be Algoma's future from a religious stand-point ? This under God, rests mainly with us. If, like our Episcopal brethren in the United States, who in this set us a noble example, we will antici-

pate the development of this territory, and have our Missionary Bishop, and Clergy ready to welcome the newly arriving immigrants, we may firmly plant in that vast and promising territory our own pure branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, and thus confer a blessing incalculable on its present and future inhabitants.

What loyal son of England's Church will not, for His Master's sake, and his Church's sake, do what in him lies to bring about a result so happy? Are there, as I am informed, one million baptized members of our Church in the Upper and Lower Provinces? Say that half of them give nothing; there remain 500,000; twenty cents a head from these raises the whole required sum of \$100,000 for the endowment of the Algoma Diocese.

Whether however this endowment scheme, or the more feasible plan (in my humble judgment) of an annual missionary sermon for the Missionary Diocese till it is able to provide for itself, meets the approval of this Provincial Synod, I feel sure that such a distinctly missionary object as that before us now, would enlist the warmest sympathies of our fellow Churchmen in Canada. Let us then take the matter in hand with all earnestness of purpose.

Already a beginning has been made. The venerable society for the Propagation of the Gospel, true to its charter, has promised the noble sum of £1,000. Other gifts from England and Canada have been promised. Our offertory to-day is to be applied towards the endowment of this new Diocese of Algoma. Oh! Let us be up and doing. Let us be in earnest. Let us be united.

Our time for work may not be long. **THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH.** Not many more Advent seasons may the Church

summon us to keep. Ere long we may see "the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven." Yes, (most welcome thought) ere long we may see Him whom we love, and hail His long promised Advent with anthems of praise.

Be this as it may. Be the interval that parts us from the Advent of our King long or short, let us so employ it, that when the Master comes and reckons with us, we may receive from Him the commendation—"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord."
